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Letter dated 3 September 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In December 2012, Member States negotiated a resolution in preparation for the high-level dialogue on international migration and development to be held in October 2013. The resolution includes a provision called "non-objection basis" that has allowed Member States to anonymously bar the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) without stating the reasons for their objections.

It was brought to our attention that two Israeli NGOs and one British NGO have been blocked from participating in the High-level dialogue by the Syrian delegation and the Arab Group. While silencing civil society may be the norm in the Arab world, the censorship and suppression of NGOs should not be tolerated in the United Nations.

One of the barred Israeli NGOs was Microfy, which provides assistance to African refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom fled the genocide in Darfur. The other Israeli NGO, Center for International Migration and Integration, advises Governments and NGOs around the world on migration and integration. The Center for International Migration and Integration has had observer status with the International Organization for Migration since 2003 and has partnered with many other national and international organizations, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

The exclusion of the Israeli NGOs was clearly a result of where they are based, rather than on the basis of their valuable work. It is shameful that the Arab Group continues to use the United Nations as a platform to further its political agendas, particularly when it comes at the expense of civil society.

We call upon Member States to oppose the "non-objection" practice during negotiations on future General Assembly high-level meetings.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 22 (b).

(*Signed*) Ron **Prosor**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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